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THE NEW MEDITERRANEAN

BY BRUNO ROSELLI

No less than nineteen different flags wave lawfully along the Mediterranean Sea at the present time, if we interpret the term Mediterranean to include the Black Sea and the Adriatic; and one or two more may at any minute be hoisted. As a result of the War, the once ubiquitous Turkish emblem has been confined, in the Mediterranean proper, to a limited zone northwest of the island of Cyprus; the Bulgarian floats only along the Black Sea, while the Yugoslav has for the first time tasted salt water, and the Austro-Hungarian is a thing of the past; the yellow and white Papal flag has waved in the Mediterranean breeze on boats of Catholic countries transporting high Church dignitaries; the legal murder of Montenegro has abolished her standard; we have learned those of Palestine, Armenia, Ukrania, and Fiume; while the blue and white flag of the Interallied Entente has again and again forced entrance into a port of unsettled political status, notably in the Adriatic. And the changes have not been limited to national emblems. Egypt is sulky and far less accessible, Genoese seamen under Signor Giulietti have attempted Sea Socialism, former Turkey is a checkered battlefield, American naval units which President Wilson rushed to the Adriatic in 1919 seem to have taken root there, Ragusa has been re-christened Dubrovnik and is alive again, Trieste and Fiume are dead, and Sardinia demands self-determination. Plenty of news; and mainly troublesome.

Yet this year has seen a large amount of American tourist travel in Mediterranean lands. This is partly because a red-blooded people cannot be kept forever from the chief school, altar, and playground of our planet by interested reports of lack of butter and anti-Wilson recriminations; partly because America, having jumped into World War and almost into World Partnership while stupendously ignorant of the history and geography of

all foreign countries other than England, France, and Germany, has now jumped out of both with a sobering realization of such ignorance, a salutary fear of vicarious information, and an eagerness to learn by the excellent method of visual instruction.

When these tourists pass between the Pillars of Hercules, I hope they realize that Gibraltar is more than a reminder that England shares with the Catholic Church a knack of parking on the most picturesquely strategic spots in the world, and that a right-angle triangle is one in which the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides—even if the hypotenuse be the bluest sea water; it is the perfect production and tangible symbol of British insularity.

Gibraltar's own war is over, but now she sees other people's wars: for Spain is again at the Moors. The Spaniards have no easy time, either, in establishing themselves firmly on their little strip of Northern Morocco, while France "pacifically penetrates" the remaining nine-tenths of the country.

And French Morocco has certainly blossomed forth since the armistice. This being a non-political article, I shall not explain how the French took over this non-warring land as a consequence of the war. I prefer to take off my hat to General Lyautey, now an Immortal of the Academy, for his superb qualities as a colonial administrator. He has even succeeded in creating a fine body of native Moroccan officers in a country where the military career was considered debasing by the best families, and has made it coöperate with the smart young French officers of the new protectorate, thus forming another link in that romantic chain of North African French troops which includes the Foreign Legion. But the links connecting this huge new North African empire of France, which on the Mediterranean includes Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis, and extends across the Desert to Senegal in the West, French Congo in the South, and French Sudan in the East—one-third of Africa—are not only of a military nature. A railroad will soon unite Casablanca with Tunis; and already excellent automobile roads are opened on which motor tours, free or personally conducted, are carried on. The sleepy days are over.

Algiers herself is a tribute to French colonization. Those of

us who think of her in terms of the canvases of the French "Orientalist" school imagine a city far more barbaric and Oriental than the Paris of North Africa is to-day. Now Algiers shines with electric lights, transports its motley population in the swiftest trolley cars which climb superb hills dotted with villas; boasts boulevards only a bit less dusty and *boulevardiers* only a bit less elegant than those of Paris; and glories in department stores where goods sell sometimes at a fraction of cost, having to be disposed of there or not at all.

Tunis is a sad place for an Italian to visit nowadays. Ever since the French occupied in 1881 this advance post of *Italianità* in Northern Africa, an Italian has felt there as I suppose a negro must feel in a Mississippi town: a member of an unwelcome majority which can be curbed but not ignored, a silent reminder of errors of the past. But now the situation is worse. Thousands of local Italians (most of them Sicilians born here) crossed the sea to fight under the red, white and green tricolor, and returned to Tunis with the proud spirit and the lifted forehead of the Italian veteran who has seen his country hard at work on the biggest job of her new history. Such people are hard to Frenchify. And so those who pull the strings of the *Régence* (which is *de facto* a French colony) have replied, by passing laws forbidding other than French citizens to live in the *Régence* more than a short, specified period. And most of the Italians have lived there all their lives, having arrived long before the French! It is a cruel situation. I suppose it will end by the Italians conforming in appearance, and availing themselves of a new clause of the Civil Code of Italy which declares the denationalization of an Italian to be null and void whenever it is "not spontaneous".

But now let us look at the other side of the ledger. When the Italians took Tripoli in 1911, they expected that many of their compatriots from Tunis would move across under the Italian tricolor. This did not happen, because the Italian is afraid of the fiscal and bureaucratic colonial régime of Italy, of the inconstancy of her policies, and of the ease with which people of no colonial experience and inclinations are raised to the highest steps of the colonial ladder in that country. And the World War came before Italy had been able to make much headway in the new colony.

The year 1915 found her troops withdrawing to a few Tripolitan coast towns, and her civilians repatriating. The bulk of the non-Arab civilians in Tripoli now consists of Italian-speaking Jews, who have ever been an asset for Italy in North Africa, demanding nothing and preserving, if not the culture, at least the language of Italy throughout ex-Turkish lands. It is an interesting and little-known chapter in the history of the Mediterranean, this loyalty of the Jews to the heirs of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany who protected them more or less actively in the past; and it explains why so many Italian-speaking Jews, who had never seen Italy before, volunteered in the Italian army, most of them from the military district of Leghorn, the Tuscan seaport where their fathers were registered in old Grand Ducal days.

Incorrigibly idealistic, the Italians began their colonization of "Libia" by a superb restoration of the Roman triumphal arch of Marcus Aurelius in Tripoli, and by archaeological excavations on the site of Cyrene in the old vilayet of Benghazi, now Cirenaica; and they will soon begin to work on the ruins of the ancient temple of Jupiter Ammon, in the barren hinterland of Solum, if this is ultimately adjudged to her.

Unfortunately for Italy, the oases of Siwa and Kufra are also in the debatable district; and the British (should I say the Egyptians?) might disregard Jupiter Ammon, but not an oasis. And so in 1920 a Mrs. Forbes, an Englishwoman, proceeded "spontaneously", accompanied by an Egyptian official, to the discovery of that region; and her recent book, *Kufara: The Secret of the Sahara*, is a best seller among Americans, who little realize, while reading of adventures, what a political rôle the writer has played.

But this is no time for Italy to think of enlarging Tripolitania: she had better think of reoccupying what is technically hers. Can she do it peaceably? It is a problem; but she has gone at it in the right way, changing the status of the country from that of a colony to that of a mild protectorate, by what was really a declaration of autonomy. The echo of this proclamation has stirred numberless natives, West, South, and East.

Particularly important has been its effect toward the East, in Egypt. There the restless Nationalist, the fanatic Fellaheen,

and the foreigner other than British, all foes of English rule, used Tripolitan autonomy as a means of wringing from England the promise to evacuate. It is difficult to blame them for chafing at being treated as an indifferent crowd of janitors of a precious door; it is also difficult to see what they will do with Egypt, now that England is about to give them a chance to run the state. Technically speaking, England can withdraw from the land of the Pharaohs without undue loss of prestige, keeping the Canal and a "Canal Zone", as well as sovereignty rights over the Egyptian tracks and terminal of the all-red Cape to Cairo railroad. And, the divorce once granted, it is easy to see which of the parents shall keep their promising child, the "Anglo-Egyptian Soudan".

When Rudyard Kipling, in his far-famed *Mandalay*, was singing "Ship me somewheres East of Suez, where the best is like the worst", he did not realize how appropriately and humorously his characterization of private life in the East before the War would apply to public life there after the War. Beyond Suez is chaos, politically speaking—chaos pure and simple, at least along the Mediterranean, in the former Asiatic Empire of Turkey. Jews, Arabs, French, Turks, English, Greeks, Armenians, and Italians disagree totally as to possessions, boundaries, forms of government, spheres of influence, and the rest.

Palestine first of all. Britain has it; *de facto* since General Allenby conquered it from the Turks, *de jure* since the clever Zionist plan was sponsored by the British. No wonder the Pope was displeased when he found that the Holy Land would be taken over by that Protestant country, in spite of the fact that Palestine had always been considered a region to be internationalized when freed from the Turk. But Italy had later been elbowed out of the Near East; France, the chief protector of the Catholics, could not also be the chief protector of the Jews. Thus England assumed this latter rôle; not that she wanted this additional territory, but because somebody must defend with bayonets a Jewish colony where the original Arabs, nine-tenths strong, are to be systematically and brazenly pushed out to make room for an unwarlike group of Jews imported to reinforce the original handful of their co-religionists, and dumped here because they belong to a type not good enough for Ellis Island.

Just north of Acre, Palestine ends, Syria begins. This is a French protectorate now; or, to be more specific, the Southern zone is, from Damascus to Aleppo. But the moment you pass beyond the gulf of Alexandretta, Syria proper becomes Cilicia, a name sad to French ears, because of terrific military reverses, of which America has been allowed to hear nothing, but which have been so sweeping that France has withdrawn from the region, although everybody allowed her to have it—except the owners.

Against the heart of this region is pointed, revolver-like, the British island of Cyprus. British? Why, of course: in 1878 England occupied it militarily, as a friendly measure toward its Turkish owners, in order that her troops might better guarantee the *status quo* of Asiatic Turkey! If it is true that a sense of humor redeems many situations, even this is liable to redemption.

This island has always made trouble. It began by giving the worship of Venus to the world. The heroic Bragadino was flayed alive by the Turks on this island. Recently, it has given so much malaria to British Tommies and so many worries to British Governors that England, shortly before the War, had seriously considered, I shall not say giving it back to its owners, but selling it to a third party. But the situation is different now. To begin with, nearby Rhodes is in Italian hands, as a result of the Italo-Turkish war of 1911. The population of Rhodes is about two-thirds Greek and one-third Turkish. Invited by Greece to evacuate the island, Italy replied: "Just as soon as England gives up Cyprus". England was furious, but helpless; all the more because she knew that the British occupation of Cyprus was far more irregular than the Italian occupation of Rhodes. Then she began to use persuasion. "Rhodes was, at best, a bridghead into continental Asia Minor. If England helped Italy annex a piece of Asia Minor outright, would Italy not give up Rhodes, forgetting the unfortunate formula?" She would, forgetting also one of the best of Æsop's fables.

For this is what happened: The part of Asia Minor to which Italy has been in turn granted and denied political rights for the last ten years, adjoins French (or Turkish?) Cilicia in the East and reaches to the Dardanelles in the West, taking in practically the lower half of Asia Minor. As early as 1910, Italy began to

build railroads here: perhaps with the usual intention; perhaps not, because an Italian rule over Anatolia would have appeared visionary then; while on the other hand it seems only natural that, the main railroads of the entire world having used so much Italian labor, the government of Italy should have finally exploited for itself the road-making ability which the modern Italian has inherited from his Roman ancestors, and should have turned contractor in No-Man's Land. At any rate, all plans were changed by the events of August, 1914. Eight months later, Italy, signing the Treaty of London and then plunging into the cauldron, expected that, if she emerged alive at all, she would appear holding in her arms all this vast territory. Indeed, by the later agreement of St. Jean de Maurienne, Italy was promised even a few more sanjaks. But . . .

Enter Greece. She fights a bit, plays politics and gets a thrashing on the Salonika front, and finally claims Smyrna, repeatedly granted to Italy. Now Smyrna is a Greek city, as things go in the Levant. The hinterland, however, had no Greeks, and a compromise might have been reached by the Allies doing for Greek Smyrna what Italy wanted done for Italian Fiume. Fiume! That explains the whole thing. D'Annunzio's irregular occupation of that city provided the excuse which the Allies wanted, in order to turn Italy down. They claimed that the St. Jean de Maurienne agreement rendered the London agreement null and void; and that this very St. Jean agreement was in turn rendered null and void by the lack of the Russian signature—the Russians having in the meantime gone to the wall. *Ergo*, Italy must keep out. Come on, Greece; back, Italy, back, even with your very transports loaded with troops! Italy deserves high praise for refusing to let her inflammable people know that the men-of-war of England and America—Wilson's America—were used to prevent those transports from landing thousands and thousands of Italian soldiers.

And so by the Treaty of Sèvres, signed August 10, 1920, and officially terminating the war between the Allies and Turkey, the Italian flag was altogether excluded, and the Greeks were assigned the "Territory of Smyrna" with boundaries to be carved by Greek bayonets. The ruins of Smyrna are smouldering while

I write these lines; and the tragedy—ethical, æsthetic and cultural—of the situation prevents me from yielding to a sensation of triumph as I read in my earlier notes: “Emphasize the instability of this iniquitous arrangement; history still in the making here.” The Anatolian campaign of Greece, begun with “Tino’s” triumphal entry into Smyrna, the deriding of the few Italians left, the well-screened retaliatory atrocities of the Cross against the Crescent, and the frequent toasts to the day when Hellas would be as great as under Alexander of Macedon, ends with the flight of the Greeks before the ill-organized Turkish irregulars.

The trouble is that Greece had been allowed by the Powers to grow too fast and too easily, and her head has been turned by such phenomenal growth. Everything helped it: the ancient history of these regions, the thin line of Greek merchants strewn along the shores and giving the hasty visitor an illusion of solid Hellenic civilization, the religious factor by which Macedonians and Albanians even inimical to Athens have appeared “Greeks” because they were Orthodox; the Levantine astuteness of Venizelos; the weakness of neighbors; the American-made wealth of a number of patriotic Greeks who actually presented complete men-of-war to the Hellenic Government; the Allies’ fear of Italy, who is becoming earnest and practical a bit too quickly; the linguistic ability of the Greeks, who knew what was going on in foreign chancelleries and newspapers while others were at the mercy of a few translators; the distance from the Rhine, which enabled Greece to hold aloof from the World War until 1917 and to be armed to the teeth just on the eve of victory—a victory of Pyrrhus for the other Allies. And since appetite grows with eating, the Greeks had come to believe themselves on the eve of reviving the old Byzantine Empire.

They forgot one element of the situation, however: England holds Byzantium now, and she is not ready to let go. It began as an Interallied occupation, as usual: but one day the British admiral announced to his colleagues that they might stay, but only as guests. Gallipoli was avenged, but in what a strange way!

However, not vengeance but the traditional desire of strategic power explains Britain’s course in Constantinople. What Greece would have construed as the humiliation of the con-

quered Caliph, in the language of England spells "The One Key to the Black Sea".

But of this inner body of waters I shall not speak, for it is really a separate sea in all aspects except the physical. I prefer to follow the poetic course of Leander, and to swim across the Hellespont—finding on the other side more lands recently annexed by Greece: in fact, the beginning of an uninterrupted stretch of 2,000 miles of European Hellenic seacoast, which has barred out European Turkey, Bulgaria, and Jugoslavia from any access to the *Ægean*. Can Greece give a good government to regions as difficult to rule as Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus? Countries politically far more advanced would be unable to cope with the problem which confronts her—a kingdom spread over provinces mentally at odds, and an archipelago which is a veritable European Micronesia; possessing the tradition of a unity which was racial but not political, and of a government whose unit was the city and not the nation. But the Powers are to blame for creating this problem by fostering Greek megalomania; for whenever you see a spoiled child, you must find fault with the parents first.

Only in one quarter the Greeks were turned down by the Powers: in Albania, the southern part of which the Greeks claimed as inhabited by "Albanophobe Hellenes", who turned out to be pure Albanians of Greek-Orthodox faith. It was a late settlement. Did France and England begin to see, as soon as the great mesmerist Venizelos walked out?

Few people know anything about this new state of Albania, the wildest spot in Europe, a bit of Mohammedanism only two hours from Italy, a former Yucatan for Turkish governors, past, present and future nursery for "Arnauts" to act as bodyguard for Christians through the Near East; and the only country which, in these days of governmental money-printing presses working overtime, has no money of her own, but uses that of all her neighbors at a rate which changes according to the nationality and destination of the last steamer in port. During the War, Italy had occupied the country; and she spent huge sums there, expecting to stay, according to the terms of the Treaty of London. But she had hardly proclaimed her protectorate, when France sent a cavalry colonel from Salonika to proclaim overnight a full-fledged

Albanian Republic, with the capital in a little town on Lake Ochrida where he was stationed. Naturally, the Albanians flocked to it. The Italian army was then honeycombed with malcontents: it was before order had been restored by the Fascisti, Italy's Vigilantes. The Albanians attacked the Italian garrisons in full force, the Italian soldiers appointed to relieve them mutineered at Ancona, refusing to go: Italy lost all Albania.

The world has been kind to the new state in the matter of boundaries. Just as Albania obtained Argyrocastro and Coritsa in the South, so she was awarded Scutari in the North, against the contention of Jugoslavia. Probably if Montenegro instead of Jugoslavia had been her opponent, things would not have run so smoothly, because Scutari happens to contain the tombs of the Montenegrin royal family. But the brave little land which alone in Eastern Europe withstood the onslaught of the Turk, has been foully murdered. Serbia under the assumed name of Jugoslavia has taken possession, imprisoned, killed, expelled, and then carried out elections which declared at an end the independence of proud Cernagora! *Pro bono pacis*, Italy, whose queen is a Montenegrin, refused to interfere, and even concurred with the Allies in accepting the present Yugoslav boundaries; she refused to discuss Montenegro even when she reached the long prayed-for understanding with the Serbs on the bordering region of Dalmatia.

Why is Dalmatia so unknown to Americans? It is so easily reached via Trieste, and is one of the most picturesque lands in existence. Huge mountains—the Dinaric Alps—are just behind; and a lagoon-like sea, and a maze of low wind-swept islands, and a stony grim soil, make you appreciate all the more the charming *campanili* and the superb Venetian town halls which beautify her constantly warring cities. One does not need to insist on a problem which created such a stir two years ago, beyond saying that the “intellectuals” are Italians, a true aristocratic Venetian immigration, and the masses are Slav. The combined efforts of France, England, and America having failed to provide a way out, Italy and Jugoslavia finally met without middlemen and negotiated the Rapallo Treaty, by which Italy retains Zara, the capital, which has a population ninety-seven per cent Italian, and Jugoslavia is given the beheaded country.

What can Zara do now, with her two little miles of hinterland? She is neither Italy proper, nor the capital of a Dalmatia now Jugoslav; neither a naval base nor an industrial centre nor a commercial *entrepot*; neither a colony nor a protectorate nor a "motherland". A Zaratino feels that the Italian tricolor is to him the flag of his "Great White Father" beyond the sea; the flag of the rest of Dalmatia to-day—the Jugoslav tricolor—he hates; the old Dalmatian standard of azure with three golden leopards' heads is the only emblem he feels he has in common with other Dalmatians, but that is internationally illegitimate now.

Yet an optimist can use his sense of humor even under such conditions. Take the matter of the currency. By an international agreement generally disregarded, lands under military occupation should use as legal tender only the currency which was in use previous to such occupation. Here, the previous currency was the Austrian crown, now worth a fraction of a cent if stamped by a "Succession State", and practically nil if unstamped. A stickler on legality, Italy continued to use the unstamped Austrian crowns, which, being used nowhere else, began to assemble here from the four quarters of the globe. Whereupon Italy legislated: An Italian lira must be worth seven Austrian crowns here. Bankers made millions and millions before Italy corrected the economic absurdity.

An even more striking anomaly existed at Zara a couple of years ago. You could see there a garrison of D'Annunzio's Fiuman troops, side by side with the regular Italian troops, and housed in barracks of their own. Those were the days when Italy could send no more soldiers to Fiume, lest they turn D'Annunzian. She did send, however, some men-of-war which remained "regular"; and so the *Comandante* decided to return the courtesy, and sent to Zara a picked body of Fiume troops, to live side by side with the "regulars" and incidentally inspire them with their superb discipline. It was a funny situation.

Ragusa is the city which profits by all these political irregularities. A maritime republic of considerable importance in the past, supplying to the Crusaders some of their best boats (and being rewarded by the English language by having the word "Argosy" describe a daring ship), boasting in the Cinquecento a literary

Renaissance in Latin and Venetian, yet constantly and successfully fighting the power of Venice, Ragusa had died during the last few years. Yet the Austrian Government made this port the maritime terminus of a strategic railroad leading into Bosnia; and lately, with Fiume blocked, this Yugoslav city, renamed Dubrovnik to redeem her Latin past, has become a great port of entry for Yugoslav goods.

No wonder the great Diocletian built a palace for himself in Dalmatia, so that he might rest from the cares of the Roman State. The city of Spalato is built in its colossal remains, and from this very Palatium takes its name. But the descendants of the proud Romans, who until 1877 had contrived to keep the town under an Italian civic administration, have nowhere in Dalmatia been more abused since the War than here. And the word "abused" is mild. In July, 1920, some Italian naval officers sipping coffee at a local café were attacked by the populace without the slightest provocation, and the Italian glass sign *Gelati* (ice cream) was broken over their heads. The commander of their ship, who hastened to their rescue in a little boat, was killed with rifle fire from Yugoslav soldiers ashore, under the shadow of the American cruiser *Olympia*, whose officers had done nothing to stop the riot. And what was the *Olympia* there for, unless to keep order?

You should hear what the local Italians have to say about that American squadron in Adriatic waters, sent at the time Mr. Wilson was legislating against Italy. Even more amazing was its presence in that closed sea long after the Orlando-Wilson incident. On the streets of Spalato (where, incidentally, not one Italian sign is now visible), I saw Slav girls wearing sailor hats with ribbons inscribed "Yugoslav Navy". But this navy is still on paper, although an officer whom I met qualified himself as a Yugoslav Naval Aviator. However, complacent America undertook to bridge the gap for these oppressors of the Italians. As a Spalato Yugoslav put it, "The United States, after giving us a birth certificate, have loaned to us their navy while we build one." Still, if you prefer, you may say again, "Fiume is to blame."

Every few weeks the newspapers tell us about trouble at Fiume; and again I see her, at the head of the Quarnaro, overwrought, watchful, resourceless, sullen; this city of forty thou-

sand inhabitants, everyone of whom costs Italy several million dollars; this inartistic, mongrel town whose every square inch means a square mile lost somewhere to Italy's all too crowded sons! Yet D'Annunzio is out, Italy herself is out; the Treaty of Rapallo made Fiume a sovereign state, fantastically carved so as to place the wharves and half the harbor and the warehouses and even the power plant in Yugoslav territory. Commercially ruined under D'Annunzio, the city elected to the presidency one Riccardo Zanella, whose chief claim to glory was that he had been D'Annunzio's enemy. His first real act of government was to obtain from Italy two hundred million lire for the rehabilitation of city finances; his second was to dress the Fiume militia as Yugoslav gendarmes. Then they kicked him out, and again called to Italy; and Italy again had to say "No". Now Zanella is back—for the present.

Post-bellum Romance ends here. West of Fiume, one finds along the Mediterranean that commodity so cordially detested by the Latin temperament, which is called Normalcy; but, whether in Italy or still further west, it is a normalcy less lighthearted, just a bit introspective and suspicious; equally noisy perhaps, but less communicative, and hospitable to the limit of courtesy but not of sacrifice. At the cost of indulging in alliteration, I would define the present condition of the more civilized cities along the Mediterranean as "Normalcy plus Nerves". But, frankly, who had not feared far worse in 1914?

BRUNO ROSELLI.